The
COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XLV October 18, 1946 NUMBER 1

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THE COMMONWEAL *is indexed in the Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index and Catholic Bookman. Founded by the Calvert Associates, Inc., in 1924, with Michael Williams as President and Editor.*

Published weekly and copyrighted 1946 in the U. S. A. by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. AShland 4-9685. Entered as second class matter February 9, 1934, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. U.S. and Canada $6 a year, Foreign $7. Single copies 15c

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## *The Yugoslav Archbishop*

THE TRIAL of Monsignor Stepinatz at Zagreb involves a number of grave political charges. The prosecution has sought to establish before the "Peoples Court" that the Yugoslav Archbishop is guilty of having collaborated with the German nazis and their puppet Croatian state headed by Ante Pavelich. Such actions in the eyes of the Tito dictatorship would constitute a "crime against the people."

Before weighing these charges further it is well to recall a number of pertinent historical circumstances. First the age-old rivalry between the less civilized Orthodox Serbs and their less numerous Roman Catholic Croat compatriots. And to point out the tragic fact that whatever jealousy or animosity may have existed normally between these two Yugoslav peoples was fanned into flame from time to time by troubled-water-fishing on the part of the Great Powers. It is a sorry history in which Czarist (and now Soviet) Russia has continuously played a leading part. The result is intense Serb and Croat nationalism with atrocities and reprisals on a savage scale.

These were the conditions under which Archbishop Stepinatz has had to carry on his work. What we know of his record comes from a wide range of sources: the witnesses for the prosecution and for the defense and the testimony of the American secular press, which has seldom manifested any special bias in favor of the Catholic Church and the hierarchy.

Here is the Archbishop's record: he is universally recognized for his personal courage and austerity. At the time, he urged the abolition of the royal Yugoslav dictatorship. He likewise vigorously denounced the nazi master-race ideology and such brutal nazi practices as the murder of hostages. He also violently criticized Croat-Ustashi excesses. He has been no less adamant in protesting the killing of priests and laymen by the communists. And up to the time of his arrest Archbishop Stepinatz, knowing full well the personal risk he ran, constantly demanded from the Tito government security for priests and people and a real freedom of worship.

In the course of the trial even the witnesses for the prosecution testified that he did not get along with the Croat-Ustashi leader, Pavelich, collaborator with the nazis. Although more than a third of the defense witnesses were disbarred, there were a number of priests who told of the Archbishop's orders not to engage in Croat political activities. It is a highlight on conditions in Yugoslavia that there is a question of forced conversions. But official Yugoslav testimony as far back as 1942 and current Vatican testimony absolves the Archbishop from violating that provision in Canon Law that "nobody must be obliged against his will to embrace the Catholic faith." Naturally our knowledge of the evidence is incomplete but there is plenty to demonstrate that the Archbishop's political record is excellent.

This is not to say that he has ever posed as a particular friend of the ruthlessly dictatorial Tito régime. To have been unenthusiastic about the Tito accession to power might well be a manifestation of intensely patriotic sentiments. Current press dispatches tell how Tito's secret police have even torn down the circulars asking for the prayers of the faithful for their spiritual leader; also no group of more than five persons is allowed to gather at church doors.

To understand what is happening to Archbishop Stepinatz we must go back to the original Moscow trials, where the "crime against the people" technique first flowered. Or a few months back to the trial of General Mihailovich.

These are not trials, not quests for justice as we know them—although they have some relation to Nuremberg. At Zagreb the court is packed with a Tito claque which hisses down the statements for the defense continuously. An index of the pitch of frenzy and unfairness is the way the prosecution hysterically opposed the introduction of any defense witnesses as "blasphemous" and as tending "to prolong the trial." Such is Yugoslav justice under Tito.

From another angle what is happening at



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Zagreb is the silencing of the last real voice demanding for the people of Yugoslavia the fundamental human liberties. Archbishop Stepinatz at the time of his arrest was the only remaining figure of importance whose voice could still be heard. That is the meaning of the effort of the "Peoples Court" to get rid of him.

### *Taking Issue in the CIO*

EMERGING from the war, public issues in the United States have been even more than normally confused and murky. Nevertheless, facing the elections, and facing the conventions of the AFL and the CIO, and the recent Chicago convention of the "progressive mobilizers," more American public men than is customary have actually spoken relatively clearly about issues. In fact, issues may soon grow disconcertingly clear, and we may find ourselves losing some freedom not to choose.

One grass root effort toward clarification which appears most welcome and hopeful was the formation in New York City of the CIO Committee for Democratic Trade Unionism. In New York City, the CIO has been notably communist and fellow-traveler in tone and complexion, despite the progressive efforts that have gone into building it there, and in fundamental opposition to the more wholesome beliefs and inclinations among members and leaders. Now the democratic opposition to communist influence in the New York City CIO, led by 33 of the union officials, has formed the CIO-CDTU to take the lead in work for union and general social-economic objectives.

The new committee issued two policy releases, one on foreign affairs and one on domestic issues. The fact that the foreign policy statement is proving the important one, on which support and opposition are lining up, shows fearsomely the central importance of international affairs now the way things are. The statement names Russia as "the most aggressive power in the world today," and demands that the United States "end appeasement of aggressors and take the initiative to apply the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms." For such as the *Daily Worker,* that is, of course, enough.

While the new Committee for Democratic Trade Unionism is blunt and settled in its repudiation of appeasement in foreign affairs, it is not so clear about domestic affairs nor in annotating the reasons behind its opposition to communist totalitarianism. Speaking of internal matters, it appears not completely to have broken with the trends toward appeasement of communists which have characterized many fundamentally anti-communists within the CIO. Anyway, at this early date, the domestic policy statement of the CDTU, while sounding generally progressive, does not sound sure and clear.

Rather than go through the eleven-plank platform put up by the new committee, it might be sounder at this early stage to ask a couple of the more general questions. Isn't there more than a touch of demagogy in the over-simplifications, the wild claims, the ambiguous wording and the really horrifying charges embodied in the early releases?

For example, one is forced to doubt that, simply, "Congress apparently bowed to Big Business in its failure to meet the pressing social and economic needs of the people." Congress didn't bow altogether and didn't fail altogether, and big business didn't altogether want failure. Similarly, a "Full Employment Law" would *not* "insure the stability of our economic system and the welfare of the people"—if that is what issue "4." of the domestic platform means. And so on.

The CDTU gives little evidence so far of a critical approach to the very fundamental issue of centralism and the omnicompetent state. Two dangers seem involved in this: the danger of the vulgarly totalitarian state which this group bravely opposes on the international plane but hardly recognizes at home; the blanket acceptance of the modern industrial system with the elements it imposes of the servile state, no matter what the political form—for instance, the type of suicidal urbanism which increasingly develops, the increasingly complete dependency and proletarianization of everybody, the unimaginative and uncreative acceptance of current, concentrated mass forms of production and distribution.

This new progressive, democratic group in the CIO bears many hopes. Its first step has been toward clarity and courage. Its good effect, and we believe its success in winning practical support are dependent upon forcing that line. We are asking questions because we think the CDTU is likely to care more for sincere answers than most public committees, and because for the American labor movement, nothing much better could come than a leadership and broad committee and wide backing for the most honest and sincere program that the men involved can together work out.

### *Wonderful, Wonderful Politics*

FROM the 1944 Republican platform:

> *Palestine:* In order to give refuge to millions of distressed Jewish men, women and children driven from their homes by tyranny, we call for the opening of Palestine to their unrestricted immigration and land ownership, so that in accordance with the full extent and purpose of the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the resolution of a Republican Congress in 1922, Palestine may be constituted as a free and democratic commonwealth. We condemn the failure of the President to insist that the mandatory of Palestine carry out the provisions of the Balfour Declaration and of the mandate while he pretends to support them.

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From the 1944 Democratic platform:

> We favor the opening of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonization, and such a policy as to result in the establishment there of a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth.

In neither platform was there any slightest allusion to American immigration policy.

From Elliott Roosevelt's "As He Saw It":

> The next morning brought the third visitor: King Ibn Saud, of Saudi Arabia, on his first trip away from his kingdom. . . . The King and the President talked first of the Jewish question in Palestine. It has been Father's hope that he would be able to convince Ibn Saud on the equity of the settlement in Palestine of the tens of thousands of Jews driven from their European homes, persecuted, wandering. Later Bernard Baruch was to tell me that Father had confessed that of all the men he had talked to in his life, he had got least satisfaction from this iron-willed Arab monarch. Father ended by promising Ibn Saud that he would sanction no American move hostile to the Arab people.

President Truman on the eve of the Day of Atonement:

> (1) In view of the fact that winter will come on before the conference can be resumed, I believe and urge that substantial immigration into Palestine cannot wait a solution to the Palestine program and that it should begin at once. Preparations for this movement have already been made by this Government, and it is ready to lend its immediate assistance. (2) I state again, as I have on previous occasions, that the immigration laws of other countries, including the United States, should be liberalized with a view to the admission of displaced persons. I am prepared to make such a recommendation to the Congress and to continue as energetically as possible collaboration with other countries on the whole problem of displaced persons. (3) Furthermore, should a workable solution for Palestine be devised, I would be willing to recommend to the Congress a plan for economic assistance for the development of that country.

Governor Dewey, after the Day of Atonement:

> The estimates vary, but of the displaced persons who want and really need desperately a new home there are between 800,000 and one million. . . . These people are the natural successors of the great waves of the persecuted who in the past contributed so richly to the greatness of the United States and other new nations of the world. It should not be difficult with the support and good will of both parties in ths country for an active effort on the part of our Government to procure admission both to Palestine and to the other great nations of the world for all those who are so desperately in need of peace and of an opportunity to rebuild their shattered lives. We should adjust our own immigration laws to permit the admission of our share of displaced persons, both Christians and Jews.

The whole problem, we sadly believe, would be viewed much more realistically by our politicians were the United States to have four or five million Arabs within its borders, or were our politicians frankly to admit that we already have a good many million of our own special breed of Arab whose votes are just as desirable to Congressmen as are the votes of American Jews. But politics continue incurably unrealistic, and the DP's continue to rot in their camps. The only progress we seem to have made is that at least we are now *talking* about our immigration laws, in addition to tweaking the lion's tail.

## *Our Law Was Broken*

THE LEGAL procedure followed at Nuremberg was an outgrowth, an experiment in, a betrayal—or whatever you want—of British and American conceptions of law. There was a Russian judge, but no one can say that the trial looked like a Moscow trial; there was a French judge, but the Napoleonic code was left aside if only because it would be unlikely—with a name like that—to contain provisions for judging ambitious and war-provoking generals. And whenever the English-speaking nations take the trouble to put on the best they can in the way of a legal show it will always look all right. The French, trying Laval and Pétain, never made their procedure look even half way decent; Tito, and the Russians, cannot make their law courts look as if they were in the least concerned with justice. But we have style, and what we do looks all right even when Gilbert and Sullivan get after it, and even where we start something new, as in Nuremberg, we have such confidence in all our past of law and solemn justice — our lawyers and judges are so respectable and we have the Supreme Court and *habeas corpus* and *magna carta* and the Lord Chancellor and the Declaration of Independence —that it still looks all right.

Nuremberg had style, it was dignified, it looked all right—and also it condemned men for crimes (real crimes) which were not listed in any law books as crimes at the time they were committed, and so it was not all right because we have never thought it all right to condemn anyone on an *ex post facto* law. At Nuremberg we made new law and made it retroactive, and all the king's horses and all the king's men, together with the most pure intentions to prevent anyone from ever again declaring "aggressive" war, will be unable to join together our sundered justice after its fall. This time indeed we hanged the Kaiser; we did what we did not do in 1918; we broke our own law which we did not break in 1918. We have to let it go at that.

The convicted men were criminals who tortured, robbed and starved, but they were not judged by any court they knew or could recognize, and they were not judged solely for common crimes; Germans, they were judged by foreigners who said to them: "You broke a law (in the past) we now are making (in the present)." The tenses are wrong.

With past and present inextricably bound in failure, there remains only the future—a most uncertain future, and a law, a dubious law, for another future, guiltless conqueror to enforce, after another war.

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# *Religion and Civilization*

## The rise of the omnicompetent state*

***Ronald A. Knox***

TO JUDGE by the other names which appear in the program of these proceedings, I ought to have been some kind of sociologist. Instead of which, I have never been quite certain what sociology means. All the Latin and Greek which remain in my memory assure me that it ought to mean, talking about one's allies. And I confess that I am one of those numerous Englishmen whose view is that the less said about them the better.

It is possible, of course, that this very gratifying invitation was issued to me, not as a sociologist, but as a clergyman. If so, we are worse off than ever, because I am not the right kind of clergyman; I do not want to say, and I do not mean to say, the kind of things which a clergyman is expected to say on such occasions. I know that, because in a panic I wrote to Mrs. Farquharson to ask what she *did* expect me to say; and I hope it is no breach of confidence if I quote her answer. "I rather thought," she wrote, "that you would want to argue that without religion there is no civilization, and to prove this by reference to world history, showing that at the peak periods when civilization was most evident, there has always been some form of intense religious life. You see, the scientist will be out to show that civilization is synonymous with science, and that the period in which science is notable for its progress is also remarkable for its civilization. Each lecturer may try to urge that art, literature, philosophy, etc., embodies what we mean by civilization and creates a civilized world. If you can put the case for religion, I think that will be a very good challenge for the others." You see, she knows the kind of thing clergymen are expected to say, the kind of thing almost any clergyman would have said. But I'm not playing ball; the answer, as I see it, to the question "Whither civilization?" has to be given on quite different lines, and I can only give it as I see it.

Meanwhile, I ought perhaps to indicate why I hesitate to claim that civilization at its peak has always been accompanied by intense religious feeling, and therefore ought to be accompanied by intense religious feeling now.

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First of all, you can't lump religions together like that, and treat them as one thing. If you asked me whether I would rather see England go atheist or go Mohammedan, I should find difficulty in answering. If you asked me whether I would rather that Englishmen worshipped Juggernaut or worshipped nothing, I should say without hesitation that I preferred them to worship nothing. Yet the worship of Juggernaut evokes, I conceive, a very high degree of religious feeling. I am not in favor of people having religious feeling, irrespective of the object towards which they are devoted. The point of religion, to me, is that if any religion is true, people are either very short-sighted or very wrong-headed not to believe it. If it is false, then I think it is very regrettable that they should believe in it, however much of a boost they may give to civilization in the process.

And in the second place, is it true as a matter of history that the heavily civilized periods and areas of the world show a heavy religion-content? I don't think they do. I suppose the Periclean age in Greece would be regarded as the high-water mark of the Greek culture; was that age a religious one? There was a good deal of what you might call municipal piety going about, towns quarreling with one another about the ownership of sacred images, and what not; but, although my early education soaked me in the literature of the fifth century before Christ, I could never feel the slightest sense of religious *rapport* with the age of Thucydides and Aristophanes. Or again, the Augustan age of Rome is commonly pointed to as a peak age. There is no mistaking the fact that Augustus would have liked to re-establish the old Roman sense of religiosity, together with the rest of the old Roman virtues; it was both his whim and his policy to attempt such a revival of the past. Much in the same way, public men nowadays will get up and talk about reviving religion as the only solution of our present difficulties, without any clear idea how it is to be done. That Augustus succeeded, there is no kind of evidence; the typical product of that marble Ro-

*Text of the address delivered by Monsignor Knox before the Institute of Sociology in Reading, England, which we obtained through the courtesy of the London *Tablet* and have abridged by about one-fifth.



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man culture is Pontius Pilate, with his petulant inquiry, "What is truth?" It was at a discount, evidently, in an age when the only important thing was to be Caesar's friend. Or again, Renaissance Italy would be extolled by some as a highly civilized world. Yet it would be difficult to parallel the age of Savonarola for the overshadowing of religion by ecclesiasticism.

The truth is, surely, that religion is a function of the individual person, not of the community, and that intense religious life is not to be found in the State as such, but at best in some body of devotees living within the State, protected, perhaps, even encouraged by the State, but not truly representative of it. In fact, it may be doubted whether religion is not, of its very nature, in this fallen world a recoil, a protest, an undertow. Where civilization is decadent, religion will sometimes flourish luxuriantly among the ruins; it did so, for example, in the Dark Ages. But where civilization is vigorous, religion is intense only if, and because, it is in revolt against the age, is in reaction from it. So, in the early Roman Empire, a man who really wanted to make his soul took refuge in some discredited cult which his neighbors regarded with suspicion; became a Stoic, or gave in his name to some lucifugous mystery religion, or, still more rashly, joined the hated sect of the Christians. So, in the Elizabethan age of England, intense religion was to be found not among the time-servers and go-getters who supported the Government, but in the persecuted minorities, recusant or Puritan. So, in the Grand Siècle, although there was a remarkable flowering of holiness, the most remarkable focus of its influence was Port Royal, the Jansenist centre which had to be extirpated by royal decree. So, in eighteenth century England, the Evangelical Movement was not in line with the tendencies of the age; it was a reaction from Deism in public thought, from cynical indifference to morality in public life. Intense civilization and intense religious life may synchronize; but if the former accounts for the latter it does so by repulsion. Religion underlines civilization only by protesting against it, and civilization encourages religion only by persecuting it.

It all depends, of course, on how you define civilization. There are many question-begging definitions of it, suited to the taste and fancy of the definer. Thus, an artist may tell you that the Victorians were not really civilized, because their art was so bad, or a scientist that the twelfth century was not really civilized, because it was content with an out-of-date astronomy, or a philosopher that the Augustan age is negligible, because it was barren of speculation. But if you asked yourself what you mean by a civilized as opposed to a barbarous country, the answer sticks out a mile. The answer is that a civilized country is one in which you can travel without a revolver in your pocket. Wherever you get a stable Government, which polices a country well enough to provide reasonable security for its inhabitants, the country is civilized; its inhabitants are *cives*, citizens, members of a law-abiding community, not barbarians. Various other conditions, no doubt, have to be fulfilled if you are to get anything like the perfect civilization; as, for instance, that men should be free, and that the Government should in some way represent them; that there should be no brutal ill-treatment of man by his fellow-man; that there should be a relatively high standard of material comfort. But these are extras; nobody can pretend that brutality was not common in first-century Rome, or that Louis XIV's Government was democratic, or that the early Middle Ages were at all comfortable to live in. And so it is with the other claims we have been considering. Art does not always go hand in hand with civilization, or why did the Aztecs produce nothing nearly as good as the pictures of the Cave-men? Science does not always go hand in hand with civilization, or why were the Greeks of the fifth century so incurious about the world of nature? And philosophy, as we saw just now, comes to grief on the Augustan test. All sorts of things—including even religion—may contribute to the *bene esse* of a civilization. But the *esse* of civilization is security of living; that and nothing else. You might have a cannibal civilization, as far as I can see, if the only sufferers by it were condemned criminals, and these only appeared at State banquets.

Obviously, other things being equal, a country or a period which provides security from armed disturbance favors the growth of learning. More precariously, it is a benefit to the arts and to religion, which may easily run to seed in a world which has lost the instinct for living dangerously. Civilized man has more time for the amenities of life. But that does not prove that the amenities have civilized him.

I cannot, of course, expect to carry my audience with me in proposing so crude and so materialistic a definition of what the word "civilization" means. But a man must use the tools that fit his hand, and that is the use of terms which commends itself to me. In those terms I must answer the question which is under discussion this week, elliptically put in the words, "Whither civilization?" I confess that the ellipsis bothers me, because the sentence may mean "Which way is civilization going?" or it may mean, "Which way OUGHT civilization to be going?" I am assuming that the former interpretation is more in our minds, at a time when it seems difficult to believe that you or I or even Mr. Bevin can really take much of a hand in shaping human destinies. And I

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hope it will be agreed that, in the sense in which I understand it, civilization at this moment has reached a very dangerous peak. The danger is, I mean, that we are all going to get too much of it.

Hitherto, the history of civilization has been, in great part, the history of the individual asserting his rights as against the jealous interference of the community. Tennyson, in one of those illuminating prosaic moments of his, described it as "freedom slowly broadening down from precedent to precedent." Man in his primitive stages is a creature of the herd; mass-suggestion dominates him, the village or the tribe is his unit. To that primitive, ant-like instinct he returns whenever sudden emergencies arise, a fire or a shipwreck. But long intervals of comparative security enable him to develop, more and more, into an individual; his thoughts become more and more his own, not shared, inevitably, with his neighbors. The workman emerges from status to contract, from casual labor to working under Union conditions. The citizen claims a right to vote, at intervals, for a new ruler or set of rulers. Education, especially when it means learning to read and write, leaves us less at the mercy of the mob orator and of legal mumbo-jumbo. Man becomes less of a mere cell in the community life, more of a man.

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WITHIN my life-time, a belt seems to have slipped somewhere, and the whole process is being reversed. To turn man into a mere cell again, make him live a herd-life instead of his own life, was the explicit aim of that nazi philosophy which looks so small a thing now that it is dead. The rest of it was all detail; the root heresy of the nazis was that man exists for the State, not the State for man. At the moment, we are making an amiable effort to reeducate the Germans, and bring them to a better mind. If we succeed in convincing them that the State exists for the sake of man, not man for the sake of the State, it will be a rather amusing situation. Because they will be nearly the last people left in Europe who believe it. Everywhere behind the iron curtain the last embers of what we used to call democracy are being scientifically stamped out. And are we very much better off in the West? It is true that when we have a general election we are given two parties to vote for, not just one. But our legislators, whatever the favors they happen to wear, are no sooner in the saddle than they begin dragooning us. They fall to with a will and legislate; only pausing now and again to produce an Order in Council which abridges our liberties still further without going through the formality of Parliamentary discussion. At this very moment there is an agitation among the Government's supporters in Parliament to stifle the liberty of the Press. To be sure, it is masked as a progressive measure; newspapers are no longer to be controlled by rich men, or by the rich firms which advertise in them. But since these riches are the only condition which makes it possible for a daily paper to be published in England at all, it is quite clear what will happen if the agitation is successful. Daily newspapers, like the mines and the railways and the hospitals and everything else, will be run by the State. And, by all but a handful of the population, the Opposition case will go unread.

My submission is that we, artists, scientists, philosophers, divines, are doing a disservice to mankind if we spend our time arguing among ourselves about priorty. We ought to be uniting in defense of human liberties. For, in the long run, this centripetal tendency which is sweeping everything into the hands of the State will deny us all right of free association. The omnicompetent State will refuse to admit the existence of any values except one—the supposed well-being of the community. And we, who represent the values, ought to unite in defense of the principle that values do matter.

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I do not know how much depression these head-shakings of mine—assuming that there is any substance in them—are likely to cause in my present audience. There are quite a lot of people already who look forward with apparent enthusiasm to an era in which the State will have become the Universal Provider; when it will snatch us from our parents at birth, educate us, choose a career for us, regulate our actions at every turn, and (for that matter) tell us what thoughts to think. I say there are a number of such people, even now, when there is still at least a simulacrum of democracy left in Northwestern Europe. If once the Omnicompetent State sets in, I suppose we shall all learn to welcome its advent; our minds will be carefully conditioned that way. It is what Mr. Lewis calls "the Abolition of Man." Perhaps it will be thought that I have stated some very obvious truisms about the future of civilization, supplying a commentary, for reasons best known to myself, in terms of a quite *démodé* individualism. Of religion, meanwhile, which is my subject, I have said nothing at all. These rosy dreams of tomorrow—what have they got to do with religion?

The answer is simply this—that in days like ours, when the sense of the supernatural has ebbed so unmistakably in the popular mind, the State cannot take over the office of Universal Provider without taking upon itself a still more formidable responsibility. By the logic of its own principles, it is bound to come forward as the unique source of all values whatsoever.

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The characteristic drawback of a community which recognizes no higher good than the good of the community is that, at a pinch, it does not keep its word. When Hitler invaded Russia, in contravention of a treaty through which he had gained enormous military advantage, he was acting wholly in character. To his mind (a half-crazed mind, one hopes) only one value existed, the success of Nazi Germany. As long as peace with Russia served that end, he kept peace with Russia; the moment when he conceived—wrongly, but that is a detail—that the same end would be better served by war with Russia, he paid no more attention to the treaty, or to his own signature; it had automatically ceased to be valid. You see, he had no religion. Religion in its literal, derivative sense means belief in some kind of supernatural sanction which obliges you to keep your word even to your own disadvantage. And in this literal sense you can, for once, treat all religions as standing on the same footing. I would rather make a treaty with a set of cannibals who believe that mumbo-jumbo will send a hail-storm on their crops if they break the treaty, than with a State which regards itself as the source of all values, and cannot logically keep its word unless it thinks its own interests are served by doing so.

That is where Mr. Bevin dropped such an excellent word the other day in the House of Commons, although (to my great disappointment) nobody called attention to it. He was talking, as he has often had occasion to talk, about Poland; he had, as usual, a crow to pluck with Russia. He said that it was impossible for His Majesty's Government to send the exiled Poles back to Poland if they were unwilling to go; it would be, he said, *against our religion*. By which he did not mean, simply, that it would be an un-Christian act; he meant that having passed our word we could not go back on our word to gain any advantage whatsoever. And he knew, as he said it, that Stalin did not know what it felt like, to feel like that; how should he? The other day, a severe sentence was passed on a man in Government employment who had divulged some fact about the atom (I think it was) in contravention of the Official Secrets Act. A friend of mine was discussing the sentence with a scientist he knew, a man of the highest character, who insisted that the act which had been so punished was justifiable; it would have been wrong to keep the secret if you thought that the long-term interests of humanity would be served by divulging it. You see, he had no religion.

Unfortunately Honor (by which I mean, keeping one's word) is not the only value which is affected by the modern doctrine. What of Justice? And in the last resort, what of Truth itself? So far as justice is concerned, I hope I may be allowed to record my own impression that in these last few years the very notion of it has been largely forgotten. The sentences passed all over Europe by courts of war guilt may in fact have been justified; the accused persons may have got no more than their deserts. But the procedure at many of those courts shows clearly enough that the judges were not attempting to administer justice; they were immolating human sacrifice on the shrine of a particular ideology.

But honor and justice are not the only values which lose their significance if the doctrine of the Omnicompetent State is accepted. Truth itself must await the rubber stamp of Governmental approval. I do not mean that the rulers of such a State imagine they can *make things true;* they acknowledge, like King Canute in the story, the existence of the tide. But they are so much concerned with the question: What is it good for the mass of men to believe? that the question whether it is true or not takes only second rank in the queue. Plato himself makes Socrates found the doctrines of his ideal State on a lie borrowed from Phenicia. . . . After all, as Pilate said, what is truth? In the absence of greater leisure for investigation, truth itself must be rationed; a kind of utility truth must be issued to the public, to satisfy its needs. In wartime it is called "propaganda." We forget about it afterwards. The victorious armies of 1918 never came across the factory in which, we had assured the world, the Germans extracted oil from human corpses. That the doodle-bugs were manufactured in Spain was given out with all the authority of an official Allied wireless service; we overran France, Spain was isolated from the German armies, and the doodle-bugs came over worse than ever; there was no retraction. Wars come to an end at last, but official propaganda does not come to an end. Truth cannot come off the ration all at once.

No, the Omnicompetent State will not be guilty of clumsy lying; but it will so direct public opinion as to create the impression which, from time to time, is most conducive to the general happiness, whether that impression is true or false. And it is here, as I see it, that all we who defend the values, artist, scientist, philosopher, divine, have a common task in trying to avert a dehumanizing of humanity; a conditioning of the human mind which will make utility truth pass muster as the genuine article. We are all in the same boat; perhaps I should say, we are all on the same tumbril. It is our common conviction that Truth, at all events, is a value which exists in its own right; it has a claim to be told, and mere reasons of State can be, in the long run, no reason against the telling of it.

Understand me; I do not suggest that we defenders of the values have no quarrel between

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ourselves. The artist finds the scientist a crude fellow; the philosopher frowns on the artist; the scientist writes down the philosopher as a mere visionary; and as for us churchmen, it is well known what angular room-fellows we are. But my submission is that at the present moment in the history of civilization we must all get together, leaving our private disputes to be settled afterwards; we must concentrate our attention on Public Enemy Number One, the menace of State encroachment, instead of allowing ourselves to be mopped up piecemeal. If not, we may wake up to find that the wheel of civilization has come full circle, and that Man, who started as a creature of the herd, has ended up, after a brief interval of individuality, as a creature of the hive.

# *American Authors' Authority*

## The plan for a copyright pool

***Harry Lorin Binsse***

IN JULY of this year the *Screen Writer,* official publication of the Screen Writers' Guild, published an article by James M. Cain entitled "An American Authors' Authority." In this quite extraordinary document Mr. Cain explains at length the "plight of the American writer, or of any writer whose works are sold in the United States, today." He goes on to propose a remedy for the sorry state of affairs he so eloquently describes. As a foreword to this article, we are told that it "has been submitted to the Executive Board of the Screen Writers' Guild as a plan of action for the Guild and for the Authors' League of America as a whole. The members of the Board unanimously approved his proposals in principle . . ." This program is now officially approved not only by the Screen Writers' Guild but also by the Radio Writers' Guild and has been submitted for approval to the Dramatists' and Authors' Guilds as well as the Authors' League. A public meeting to consider it is scheduled for October 20 in New York.

Hence we can see that the proposal made by Mr. Cain—and made only after consultation and with the collaboration of a considerable group of screen writers—is no fly-by-night scheme but may quite possibly be approved by the remaining two groups in the Authors' League and thus become an institution of great national importance in our daily lives. It has already aroused the violent antipathy of a group of writers who have banded themselves together for the purpose of opposing it in the American Writers Association. This group consists of a strange mixture, ranging in political views from Clarence Budington Kelland and George E. Sokolsky to Norman Thomas and James Rorty. When the American Writers Association is branded as fascist or reactionary, it is a fairly clear indication of the Stalinist politics of him who does the branding; yet the motives of its own members are so disparate that no principle can or does emerge from its statements except anti-communism.

A number of individual writers, James T. Farrell being perhaps the most prominent among them, have preferred to fight the proposed American Authors' Authority as individuals. This, partly to avoid association with the notorious "red baiters" enrolled alongside admirable persons on the American Writers Association and partly because of the feeling that the objections taken by the American Writers Association do not go to the heart of the matter. After reading all the available documents, I must confess that I have a certain amount of sympathy with the independent squawkers. Since I view the whole plan as intrinsically unsound, I naturally wish the best of luck to all the opposition, yet I feel that the American Writers Association has by no means made as good a case as could be made.

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To understand what all the shooting is about, it is first necessary to consider the grievances on which Mr. Cain lavishes so much emotion and so much toughness—to use what seems to be one of his favorite words. His opening sentence sets the tone. "It would be difficult to exaggerate the plight of the American writer . . ." He goes on to admit that the dramatist "has, it is true, at least the appearance of a favorable status." The magazine writer, however, "hasn't even the appearance of a favorable status." As for the man who writes books, "his situation is even worse." If you should be writing for radio, your "situation is still worse." But if a writer deals with the Hollywood fraternity, "he is probably the worst off of all." And the final lament voiced by Mr. Cain for his brethren in the shackles of the movies reads thus: "In no branch of the business can you have a picture until you have a script, and yet in a business that manufactures glory as a baker

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manufactures bread, there is none so poor as will weave a writer's chaplet, or even put a dandelion in his buttonhole." Such phrases from one who was formerly a bright young Menckenite make one wonder a little about the recrudescence of what the master used to describe as beautiful letters. But the final wail is reserved for Mr. Cain's discussion of the ungrateful treatment meted to the unhappy author by an ungrateful Republic. Here "our situation approaches the desperate."

The quality of what Mr. Cain and his brethren produce in Hollywood is indeed desperate — it might even be described in stronger language. But I am morally certain that this is not what Mr. Cain has in mind, since he himself is an outstanding practitioner of what might psychologically, morally and artistically be called the desperate school. No, what he means is economic desperation as well as the feeling that he and his colleagues, to paraphrase the words of his plan, are suffering from the sickening conviction that they are saps, that they are doing nothing on their own behalf, that they deserve what they get. Since, according to the October *Harper's*, nearly 200 of the Hollywood writers now make over $15,000 a year from the movies alone, one cannot help suggesting to Mr. Cain that he ought to acquire some sense of proportion before referring to the condition of American writers as approaching the desperate.

He starts, then, by telling us that it would be difficult to exaggerate the plight of the American writer and proceeds to give himself the lie very neatly by exaggerating it beyond all measure. Perhaps this is what Mr. Cain means by being tough. Perhaps he cannot express himself without being tough since, as we shall see, he values almost at zero the common sense and intelligence of his fellow-writers and since he seems to have a totally mechanical conception of the writer's function. Thus he begrudgingly admits that the dramatist—that relatively happy aristocrat—"is favorably situated only if he has a hit on his hands . . . But if he has only a script on his hands, and it is a question of his chances for a production that will exploit it successfully, all that can be said is it is a matter of luck." (Mr. Cain's use of English, it might be added, is on about this level throughout.) Now the use of the phrase "on his hands" seems to me to indicate pretty amply Mr. Cain's respect for the function of the writer. Whatever one might think of its qualities, would one be likely to congratulate Mr. Cain for having had — and for still having — "The Postman Always Rings Twice" on his hands?

But leaving all this to one side as being portentously close to philosophy, it must be granted at once that the American writer has many legitimate grounds for complaint. Many of these—indeed, I should say, all of them—are dealt with by Mr. Cain, but on highly various levels of legitimacy. Thus his principal kick on behalf of the playwrights seems to lie in the fact that they are dealing with a "whacky," fly-by-night group of principals—the producers, "most of whom are temperamentally peculiar." This, of course, is perfectly true. Yet the point might be made that our contemporary producers are nowhere near whacky enough: they produce according to pattern and are frightened breathless at any thought of violently disturbing this pattern. They are whacky, then, in a very special way. They are conventionally whacky. But the real question is, will any action taken by the dramatists do anything to change their habits and customs? This is at least open to doubt. At best the theater is a terribly speculative business not likely to attract many entrepreneurs who are not "temperamentally peculiar." It is to be suspected that Mr. Cain here beats a dead horse.

When he comes to the magazine writer, he has three complaints. He makes them completely without qualification. Such a writer "is faced with all sorts of insulting rules, arbitrarily imposed on him by editors; he may offer his work to only one magazine at a time," thus being deprived of a competitive market and reasonably prompt decisions. "He is compelled to yield to the magazine a senseless catalogue of rights, of no use to it, but of considerable value to himself, on the pretext that it must 'protect itself' until after publication, when they will be returned to him, a promise usually broken." (1) Insulting rules. What, precisely, are these? The only rules I know about, after nearly twenty years' experience, are rules of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, imposed for the sake of uniformity. Mr. Cain may have in mind the fact that certain magazines limit the scope of the material they print. But can such limitation be described as "rules?" I frankly do not know what he is talking about. (2) Simultaneous submission. Today it is indeed viewed almost as a matter of ethics that an author should not submit the same manuscript to several magazines at the same time. Perhaps it is true that he could get prompter decisions were this not prevalent practice. Yet any agent worth his salt knows how to ensure a competitive market despite this practice, and if it were generally disregarded, the confusions, bad blood and endless mixup which would result are terrible to contemplate. (Remember that even so relatively small an enterprise as THE COMMONWEAL has to consider an average of at least 3,000 unsolicited manuscripts a year.) Mr. Cain's proposal would be physically impossible except for top writers who are doing very well already. (3) Rights. His final

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point is valid to the extent that it is true. Generally speaking, an author should be asked to sell first serial rights to a magazine. Yet there are times when all that an author submits is raw material, requiring as much if not more work on the part of the editors than he himself has given to it before it is fit for publication. Should this not be taken into account in considering equity with regard to further serial rights and digest reprints?

Mr. Cain's bill of particulars against the book publishers is based upon their insisting upon fifty percent of the revenues from various subsidiary rights—foreign, reprint, serial, book club, digest, etc. Here he has a reasonably good case. There have been many inequitable provisions in book contracts, many of them held over from the days when subsidiary rights of this sort were of trifling value. Yet he completely fails to acknowledge that the better houses have of their own accord been liberalizing their contracts so that some of the abuses which annoy him the worst could today only take place sporadically. This is particularly true of his remarks about the fate of an author's rights in case of bankruptcy and about sweating out "the bitter Gethsemane of the 'option on two more books.'". (It is hard to credit Mr. Cain with such an unbelievable metaphor, yet there it is.) In any case, the remedy for all this is very simple. The Dramatists' Guild—and Mr. Cain does not even mention this—long ago found the solution by working out a standard contract intended fully to preserve a member's rights. Why has not the Authors' League, or the Authors' Guild, done the same thing long since? Perhaps because authors would be unhappy if they could not gripe?

The complaints lodged against both screen and radio are certainly the most justified of all. Here, however, the problem is more complicated. Very frequently the writing for these media is the work of a whole group of persons, and inevitably the protection of all the interests involved is more complicated than is the protection of the interests of an individual or a simple partnership. Undoubtedly this is why the present movement was initiated by the screen writers and at once seconded by the radio writers. Some licensing scheme might work admirably in this case. Yet precisely because the problems here are different, precisely because the psychological nature of these two crafts differs from that of other authors, it would seem that these men and women should work out their problem separately, and not try to impose an over-all solution which would take in—ideally—everything written for sale in the United States.

Finally, Mr. Cain has much to say about the tax situation. And much that he says is true. Yet here again the solution seems relatively simple. With the existing Authors' League and its constituent guilds, would it not be possible to clarify and improve the laws regarding literary property and the methods whereby it is taxed? Surely no million dollar lobby is required. Has any recognized group, representing the writers of America, ever done anything more than belly-ache on this subject? If court decisions have been manifestly inequitable, is there any reason to believe that Congress could not be persuaded to do something about it? The pen must be mighty weak if for these many years it has been subject to such injustices and has not succeeded in remedying them.

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On the basis of this exaggerated indictment, what does Mr. Cain propose? He proposes the establishment of an American Authors' Authority to which will be sent all works written by any member and which will copyright them "in its name for his benefit." The Authority will refuse to copyright all works except those "from writers who have become members of the proper guild." It will "lease no rights except to lessors who comply with the basic agreements of the guilds." The Screen and Radio Writers' guilds will "permit our writers to work on no material not leased through the Authority," and thus "will compel every writer in the country hoping for picture or magazine sale to send his work to the Authority for copyright before the magazines or publishers get it." This general process of compulsion will interpenetrate the whole field of the dissemination of the written or spoken word, substantially all writing produced in America being copyrighted by the central American Authors' Authority. What we have here is a purely bureaucratic and organizational solution, instructed to use "every means" to win its ends.

It is specifically indicated that eventually the four guilds will be possessed of a "massively powerful organization . . . with a $1,000,000 kitty and a full-time tough mugg at the head of it." The Authority would serve its individual member by taking care of his "RIGHTS." This basically means that it would safeguard for his benefit the various rights springing from his basic copyright, concerning which Mr. Cain somewhat insultingly and wholly unhistorically remarks, "If, in the 3,000 years since Homer, he still is ignorant, as a rule, even of HOW to copyright, it would seem indicated that he should admit he's not the type and flunk the test." Similar estimates of the intelligence and judgment of authors pepper Mr. Cain's proposal. Furthermore, the Authority would itself fight through the courts cases involving infringements of an author's rights. Such fights, Mr. Cain tells us, would be "smashing, relentless." Which is all very well when the de-

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fendant is a publisher or producer. What happens when he is likewise an author, and hence a fellow-member of the Authority? Finally, the Authority would eventually levy a tax on all the industries which make use of writing, out of which to pay annuities to incapacitated, superannuated or otherwise unfortunate writers, as well as, perhaps, to their widows and children.

The aim of this plan, then, seems to be a combination of protecting those poor saps, American authors, against their constitutional incapacity not to sell their birthrights for a mess of pottage, to fight for them in court, and to give them social security. The proposed price to be paid for all this is the creation of a potential of power frightening in its implications. Especially when we recall that a number of the proponents are Stalinists. For the full-time tough mugg Mr. Cain wants to have at the head of his AAA might, under proper conditions, consider it in line to do a lot of things against which single independent authors—or even a minority group of such—could find no effective protest. At the moment, the direction in which his action might tend is indicated by the first paragraph given under the heading, "What the Authority Will Do." "Copyright, in its own name for their benefit, all material produced by writers, whether for stage, screen, book, magazine, or radio, except material *produced on salary* and not subject to the writer's copyright." I do not suggest that it would be the inevitable result of such a setup, but a person might be forgiven for wondering whether this does not reflect a desire to put all writers on a basis as unfree as their present Hollywood and radio colleagues, who have perhaps, somewhat uneasy consciences. Certainly the pressure toward *hiring* writers would be greatly increased.

But, however much one may be tempted to see in the scheme a convenient vehicle whereby Stalinists may hope they can get a stranglehold on American writing and thinking, that is not really the point. For if, in a few years, it should become fashionable for the more aggressive members of our writing fraternity to take on some other totalitarian ideology, the danger could well be equally great. The vehicle for power would remain, with its tough mugg president elected by four directors, each in turn elected by the four guilds, and with all appointments (remember that $1,000,000 kitty) residing with the president. Politically, the scheme is a lulu, complete with gravy train.

And when we consider afresh the reforms which really need to be put through, we wonder whether it has ever been proposed to do so little with so much—to accomplish in so complex a way what the bumbling Authors' League and the various guilds should simply have been busy accomplishing these last twenty years.

# Visit to a Parish

JOHN C. CORT

IF YOU take the bus from the New York ferry landing, you wander up and down and around, and eventually you come out on the road that runs along the Atlantic Ocean. There are a lot of bungalows and a smaller number of two-story houses, and pretty soon you are in Midland Beach, which is a community of maybe 3,000 in the summer and 1,500 in the winter. It is a working class community: longshoremen, truckdrivers, shipbuilding workers, not many white collars. Most of them are Catholics—of Irish, Italian and German stock—and there is only one Protestant church in the town. Things are much better now, but as recently as 1939 there were 56 percent on relief. That gives you an idea. It is not a wealthy parish. In fact, it is a parish where in ordinary times there is a great deal of poverty and a good deal of misery and a quota of despair.

St. Margaret Mary's Church is on Lincoln Avenue, about a quarter of a mile back from the ocean, and it is a fine-looking Romanesque building with a handsome clock tower. When you go inside, the first thing that hits you is the cheerful look of the place. The ceilings of the nave and side-aisles were very plain in finish, a fact which did not discourage the pastor, Father John Monaghan, who has had them painted in the old Polychrome style—red, white, blue, green—and this well-ordered riot of color, together with the plain white walls and the red baldachino behind the altar, gives an effect at once of gayety and simplicity and charm that is a pleasant relief from the studied gloom of so many Catholic churches. As Father Riordan, one of the assistants, remarked, "It's all part of the *sursum corda* business."

Sunday Mass at St. Margaret Mary's is an interesting and for most people a novel experience. When you come in you notice a large pile of leaflet missals on a table by the main aisle. There are others in the pews, left from the previous Masses. No charge. The priest who is saying Mass enters the sanctuary, and at the same time another priest, in cassock and surplice, comes out into the nave and stands in the center aisle. As the first priest starts the prayers at the foot of the altar, the second one reads them in English and the people make the responses and say the Confiteor together, also in English.

The first priest proceeds with the Mass in Latin, adjusting his speed to that of the people and the latter read the Introit in English together, alternate with the second priest on the Kyrie, and read the Gloria together. Then they say the Collects privately, listen to the second priest read the Epistle, say the Gradual and Alleluia privately and rise to read the Gospel in unison.

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At this point the priest at the altar, who on this occasion is Father Bardes, another assistant, calls attention to the weekly mimeographed bulletin, "Our Parish," which contains all the necessary announcements and which will be distributed free after Mass. He then proceeds without further delay to the brief summer instruction, a dissertation on the Sign of the Cross, during which he makes the rather startling, but historical point that in the time of Christ the cross was in the eyes of all people a symbol of horror and shame that can only be compared with the electric chair in our own day. Father Bardes, who is as handsome as Father Riordan in a darker, heavier way, also points out that the first crucifix, dating from about 250-300 A.D., was not the type we know today, but a crucifix of Christ the King, wearing the robes and crown of a king, risen and glorious. "The symbol of shame had become a symbol of joy." To illustrate this historical data he points upward to the large roodbeam that crosses the sanctuary above the communion-rail, upon which there is an excellent example of such a crucifix by Robert Robbins.

After the sermon all rise to make a public declaration of their faith in the reading of the Creed. The Offertory is private, but the priest in the nave alternates with the people on the verses of the *Lavabo,* and the people make the response for the *Orate Fratres* and for the introduction to the Preface. Then all say the Preface and the *Sanctus* together. From this point to the Lord's Prayer all is silence except for the bells, and the priest at the altar saying *"Nobis quoque peccatoribus."* It is a very interesting and important fact, by the way, that this silence is distinctly more silent than any you will find at the usual Low Mass. There is an almost sensational absence of bead-rattling, change-jingling and general fidgeting. It is apparent that the congregation is for the most part so intent on its missals that it has no time for anything but the Mass.

The priest in the nave having read the introduction to the Our Father, the people join together in the recitation of this great prayer, following which he reads the Deliver us, O Lord and all say the *Agnus Dei* and, a few seconds later, all repeat the *Domine non sum dignus.* The priest says aloud the priest's communion prayers and the prayer before the blessing. Otherwise all is quiet until the last Gospel, when all rise to pronounce in unison that final magnificent summation of our faith, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. . . "

It should be noted, in passing, that whenever the priest at the altar turns to the congregation to say *"Dominus vobiscum,"* the second priest translates, "The Lord be with you," and the people respond, "And with thy spirit." The server, of course, says *"Et cum spiritu tuo,"* as a good little server should. It should also be noted that whenever the second priest or the congregation reads aloud, it is in English. And it should be emphasized again that the priest at the altar says Mass in Latin exactly as it is said everywhere else, except that he says it slowly enough to keep even with the people.

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Ideally, it would be better of course if everybody stuck to the Latin, and perhaps this kind of *missa recitata* is still possible in Latin countries, where the language of the people has a strong blood relationship to the language of the Mass. But in America we don't understand Latin, even instinctively, and probably never will. That seems fairly certain. And so, even if you admit the value and importance of the Latin, you must also admit at the same time that the typical Low Mass in this country cannot escape examination in the light of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter XIV.

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise you, except you utter by the tongue plain speech, how shall it be known what is said? For you shall be speaking into the air. . . . For if I pray in a tongue [a strange language], my spirit prayeth: but my understanding is without fruit. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, I will pray also with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, I will sing also with the understanding. Else, if thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that holdeth the place of the unlearned say, Amen, to thy blessing? Because he knoweth not what thou sayest? For thou indeed givest thanks well: but the other is not edified."

"If the trumpet give an uncertain sound . . ." It does seem that if ever there was a time for Christians to be preparing themselves for battle, this is it. And yet the sound heard in most American Catholic churches at most Low Masses is far from certain. Mostly it is either uncertain or completely inaudible. Too often there is no longer any trumpet at all—only the tinkling of bells.

In an article in *America* several years back Father Monaghan put it this way: "The Mass must be restored to the intelligence and affection of the people. . . . The Mass should not be a closed book to the worker—who is Everyman. The Mass should be vocal; the congregation not an audience but actors. Catholic social reformers need the liturgical movement to open the lips of the people and put words, and singing words, on the good thing that Christ and men do when a priest and the people pray the Mass together. . . . The liturgy is never exclusive. It is no more a private, personal devotion than the Incarnation is a private enterprise."

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Later that day you sit with the pastor on his enclosed porch, looking out at the garden in the back where there is a statue of Saint Francis and the Birds, a small fountain playing and a lawn that is in remarkably good shape when you consider the fact that several hundred children must resist temptation every day. Father Monaghan talks about the parish and the school, and he talks with the easy eloquence of the articulate Irishman, the brogue of his youth just barely visible on the surface of his words. He is a stocky, black-haired man of middle-age, with a humorous shrewd look about the eyes and a way of speaking that moves naturally from the conversational to the oratorical when the spirit moves him.

He speaks of all that he has learned about that elusive thing, democracy, in the seven years since he first came to Midland Beach. The Community Council, for example. Several years before they had tried to start one. The town needed it badly. There was no local government of any kind. But the first council had been appointed. It was a flop. More recently, they had tried again. They had called a town meeting, and the meeting had elected a council which, with the full backing of the community, was proving to be a great success. The Protestant minister was vice-president, an excellent choice, and the president and most of the other officers were parishioners. It was really amazing to see the difference when the men realized they had been chosen by the people, and it was equally amazing to see the difference in the people's attitude toward them. The Council was working on a wide variety of problems: transportation, town beautification, social and athletic facilities for the young. Now they had sold the Council the idea of a credit union.

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The credit union too had been tried once before at St. Margaret Mary's, in the days before the war when it had been even more necessary. It too failed to catch hold, and the discussion of its failure gives rise to some interesting observations. "The main reason it failed," says Father Monaghan, "was, strangely enough, because so many of the men were unemployed. Few people realize the importance of a job on a man's whole attitude. Without a job he feels hopeless and helpless. Nothing is of any use. Nothing but a job—a steady, paying job. It is not only that he must have the money to live, but it is part of a man's nature that he must exercise his power over things. He must create. He must imprint his personality somehow on the world about him. A woman is different, radically different. It is her nature to maintain, to conserve, to receive. The man must create, he must dominate—and to do this he must first of all have a job, a good job. A society that cannot provide good jobs for its men is a society that is built upon shifting mud."

As you listen to Father Monaghan on jobs and note the passion in his voice, it is easy to understand why he should also be chaplain and one of the founders of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, known throughout the land as a doughty champion of labor. For at Midland Beach he has seen, in the vivid colors that only the pastor of a poor parish can see, just exactly what trade unionism has done for his people and how much more it has to do. He has seen also how much capitalism has failed to do for them. These things explain the extensive work the parish has done, particularly before the war, in finding jobs for its unemployed.

In almost everything Father Monaghan says about his parish you can see the working out of his few basic principles: the identification of Church and people, the importance of participation, the value of responsibility and/or democracy, the danger of clerical paternalism. He speaks of the parish societies, each with its own social and educational program: the Holy Name for the men, the Children of Mary for the girls and young women, the Legion of Mary for the works of mercy, the Boys' Club, the Christ Child and Saint Mary Margaret Giulds for the mothers.

But it is easy to see that Father Monaghan's special pride and joy is the school. There is no imposing building to show off. Six of the classrooms are below the church, the other two in a one-story schoolhouse built by the men behind the church. That night Father Riordan takes you on a tour of inspection. Perhaps there are other schools like this, but you have never seen them. The eighth-grade room, for example. The windows are large and low and hung with attractive curtains. In the windows hang ferns, and other plants are scattered about the room in profusion. On the wall are excellent reproductions of Rembrandt, Leonardo, and other old masters. The place is spotlessly clean and neat. Except for the desks, it looks more like the living room in a cultivated home than a classroom in the grammar school of a poor working class community. The other rooms are lesser reprints of the same thing —plants, curtains, pictures. In the hall you notice a good print of a Grant Wood.

Says Father Monaghan, "A classroom without at least a copy of a fine painting is a poor tenement of beauty. The pictures and plaster art that come from south of Chambers Street hang like sweetmeats in so many classrooms, destroying by their sissy prettiness all taste for loveliness, all savor for the hardihood of Christ and the vigor of the saints."

Every class has its own elected officers, its own self-government. Richard Russo, class-president of the fourth grade, calls his meeting to order

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and the secretary, a cute little redhead with a large band-aid across her cheek, gets up and reads the minutes of the previous meeting in a clear, bright voice. In another classroom there is a meeting of the editorial board of the school paper, a mimeographed job of as many as 18 pages, with fine illustrations and several articles from each class, all done by the children.

Last year's "Rood Beam," the only year book published by the graduating class of a local grammar school, as far as they know, is an excellent job. "The Star," a mimeographed weekly put out by several eighth-graders for the whole community, is full of ads, sells for three cents and makes money. This training in self-expression, self-help and self-government is common to progressive schools, but at St. Mary Margaret's it has been tempered, and saved, by contact with Catholic tradition and Catholic discipline.

Since Father Monaghan was himself for many years a professor of English in Cathedral College, it is only natural that he should be particularly interested in his book department. In addition to an individual library in every classroom for reading on the premises there is a school library of over 1,000 volumes, catalogued and run by the children themselves; the school's lending library for the community, the only one in Midland Beach, has over 800 books, including the latest and cleanest best-sellers, all for no charge.

★

In a recent address to a meeting of Catholic teachers, Father Monaghan summed up the philosophy that motivates his school: "The catechism says that every one of us is made to know, to love and to serve God. These words tell very little to a child. He needs to see things. A child wants to know everything, God above all things. By the things that God has made, the child sees God and knows Him. Every science of earth and sky, all living things, all knowledge manifest His power, His wisdom and His glory. Above all, the child learns God, comes to know God by seeing human goodness.

"We learn from the child that he is made to love and that nothing less than God will satisfy his heart's hunger. But how is he to know how to use the terrible dynamics of his affection? The words 'to love Him' must be made flesh so that he sees how lovable God is. He must sense disciplined, selfless affection in his teachers. He must be inspired by the loveliness in every art, particularly in the art of living, which all great literature unfolds and every good teacher portrays. The child reads your heart better than he knows your mind. The child learns how God so loved the world, not from a book, but by watching human eyes. To the child there is no neutrality in the heart."

# *The Stage & Screen*

## *Ballet Theater*

THE AMAZING *tristesse* of the atmosphere at the Broadway where this young company has been dancing faultlessly for over a week, seemed mysterious to me. However, in an astute communique in last Sunday's *Times,* John Martin neatly elucidated the current "war" between the managers, delivered an affectionate censure to Lucia Chase and Oliver Smith (producers of this troupe) for their promotional methods, and concluded with the incontestable judgment that Ballet is art not show business and must indeed be developed from "basic creative ideas." I think it is undeniable that Miss Chase and Mr. Smith have been somewhat misguided in assuming the weapons of their enemy, S. (for Legree?) Hurok, rather than forging new ones of their own. And that they seem so far to be leaning upon their recently acquired international reputation rather than building an inherent one. Certainly their importation of the English work "Les Patineurs" as a major première amounts to some sort of editorial muddle. Completely agreeable, this Frederick Ashton arrangement still displays sadly repetitious choreography, a candy set and costumes by Cecil Beaton, and does not truly, I feel, justify the anticipation aroused by its title. Even the brilliant dancing of John Kriza as a kind of Jack Frost could not rear it into significance.

Otherwise, the company's programming seemed usual, the dancing really expert. Robbins's "Interplay," Tudor's "Pillar of Fire," Balanchine's early "Waltz Academy" are alternated with a number of classical *pas de deux,* evidently planned especially for Alonzo and Youskevitch. The inclusion of these classical pieces does indeed point up Mr. Martin's stricture that Ballet cannot be "housed, sold or financed like a show." Somehow or other, the traditional *blanc* work does demand the gilt and plush, all the vistas of such a structure as the Met. And moreover, the form itself has come to depend upon a convention of applause to cover the small waits between variations. But with a scattered house, naturally the response is equally scattered, and the result is a certain droop in the grace of the dancers, as wonderful as they are. I think the position of Youskevitch in this troupe is a crucial one for the management to solve. Far and away too mature to fit into the Robbins type of juvenilia, and too freely talented to be useful in the clinical explorations of Tudor, he is still the most wholly exciting of dancers, and for him to be employed only in re-dressed revivals will be silly, surely.

All in all, at this stage of their independence, I think it is the Tudor "Pillar of Fire" which most amply proves the company's excellence. As I am no partisan of this designer's dream-primer of notions, it can be put down as plain prejudice that I find the business much too long, the finale pretentious, the Hänsel-Gretel set arrangement foolish. Nevertheless, the precise intensity of Nora Kaye's and Hugh Laing's series of sequences, and the quite lovely

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pantomime scheme danced by Lucia Chase, Mary Heater and Frances Rainer, seemed to me triumphs of virtuosity. And Jo Mielziner's costumes are subtly right.

If the element of invention seems at present to be lacking in the work of this now independent theater, it is still not just to assume that this will not be supplied. There are further premières scheduled for the season. And in any case, it is certainly not possible to imagine that this same element, Mr. Martin's "basic creative idea," is not now being worked and planned for the future. (*At the Broadway.*)

### *Obsession*

THE revival and re-titling of Louis Verneuil's two-person play has not, I think, managed to raise it out of the class of technical curiosities into any kind of reality. Both Eugenie Leontovitch and Basil Rathbone struggle manifestly with its assorted sordidities, and Stewart Chaney has accomplished another of his familiar double sets. However, my reaction was that for any two people in Paris now, the alarms, no less than the excursions, must *must* be different. (*At the Plymouth.*) KAPPO PHELAN.

## Adventure on Land, Air and Sea

PICTURES related to the late war continue to turn up from time to time. Perhaps this is as it should be: to remind us that the winning of the war was no easy thing and that every effort should be made to prevent another. Perhaps even a melodramatic spy-and-chase movie can serve as a reminder. Unlike "The House on 92nd Street" and "O.S.S.," *"Cloak and Dagger"* makes no attempt to establish itself as a semi-documentary. The story starts with the Office of Strategic Services being worried about the vast quantities of pitchblende that are going into Germany; there is some discussion of the race for the atomic bomb; and then our hero, a Midwest physics professor played by Gary Cooper, is rushed to Switzerland. He is unable to save the famous woman scientist who escaped there from Germany, so he is whisked to Italy where he makes another attempt: this time to rescue an Italian scientist who also knows atomic secrets. Although this plot has occasional scenes of suspense, most of the action trudges along slowly and methodically. This is surprising, for the picture was directed by Fritz Lang, a master of suspense in cinema. No doubt the script (worked over by a large number of writers) is to blame, for in the middle of the picture there is a long romantic interlude between our tall attractive American hero and the lovely young woman (nicely played by Lilli Palmer in her first American film) who works with the Italian underground. Eventually there occurs a terrifically brutal fight between Cooper and Marc Lawrence, but by that time our interest is waning. Perhaps this picture's slow pace simulates realism, but as entertainment it lags. I am glad, however, that "Cloak and Dagger" makes the point that a destruction-bent society is by no means ready for experiments in atomic energy.

*"Gallant Journey"* also suffers from script trouble—which is unfortunate for it tells the intrinsically worthwhile story of John J. Montgomery, the first man to fly. Too little is known about this visionary American who flew a glider in 1883. Producer-director William A. Wellman, who has made many good movies, must have gotten too involved in his subject. The film includes many beautiful scenes of California's skies and clouds with Montgomery gliding through them, and the effect has a nice poetic quality. But the ground scenes, the episodes revolving around Montgomery's family, romance and experiments in the workshop are repetitive and tiresome. There is a certain amount of suspense in the young inventor's struggles and adversities, but these somehow do not add up to a stirring story; and the characters fail to come to real life: Glenn Ford as the intense dreamer, Janet Blair as the woman devoted to him, Jimmy Lloyd as the daring parachutist who flies the glider, Charles Kemper as Montgomery's good friend, a priest at the Jesuit college who encouraged and helped this man who was generally considered a goof. "Gallant Journey" gets A for effort, but it fails to soar with its hero.

The best new example of an adventure film that really uses cinema to tell a robust story is *"Two Years Before the Mast."* I realize that this picture has won several scowls because its scriptwriters took liberties with the Dana novel, but as a movie it achieves its purpose; and those who prefer to have this American classic of the sea kept intact can retire to the library for their story. Producer Seton I. Miller and Director John Farrow have made a film that reeks with salt air and the smell of ship at sea. Its starry cast is led by Alan Ladd who portrays the shanghaied son of the ship's owner, but fortunately romance (with beautiful Esther Fernandez) is kept to a minimum. This is a man's sea and a man's story, and Ladd with a predominately male cast give it the works: Howard de Silva as the sadistic captain; Brian Donlevy as Richard Henry Dana who wrote this novel after this historic voyage of the *Pilgrim* in the 1830's; Barry Fitzgerald as the ship's cook; Albert Dekker as one of the leaders of the mutiny; these and many other actors sweat and revolt and starve and fight and get flogged and some even get killed before the *Pilgrim* returns to Boston. Perhaps "Mutiny on the Bounty" did the whole thing better, but "Two Years" is still an exciting film. The faint-hearted who don't enjoy a vicarious salt spray better take their box of Mother Sills.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

# Books of the Week

*Woman of the Pharisees. François Mauriac. Translated by Gerard Hopkins. Holt.* $2.50.

"NO WONDER You have so few friends," Teresa of Avila told her Creator, "seeing how You treat them." M. Mauriac is justly famous for showing in its entirety the whole bitter grimness of Christian life, and, by contrast, his wicked flourish like the best bay-trees. Brigitte Pian is no exception. This woman "of quite singular perversity," as the sainted Abbé Calou calls her, is a *dévote* who must be own granddaughter to Tartuffe himself. It is a very healthy sign that now she is described from within the church, and that her author, far from being denounced from every steeple, is praised in many pulpits.

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Brigitte Pian had married her cousin's widower and had devoted herself to her two step-children, Louis and Michèle, her devotion showing itself by her suggesting to the children that their mother was no better than she should be, and by proving to their father that his late wife was not only faithless but probably a suicide. The story, as told by Louis in the first person, begins by his being called by M. Rausch, a master at his school, to eat two chocolate éclairs and a bun, which had been sent to Jean de Mirbel, at seventeen the oldest boy in the school, by his mother, and confiscated by her uncle, the sadistic Colonel. Louis's refusal to eat the confiscated cakes precipitates a friendship immediately sealed by the gift of the bigger of two stag-beetles (not yet tamed). Jean is left for the summer holidays by his uncle at the local curé's. Intended as a punishment, this is a tremendous blessing for poor Jean, for the curé has a predilection for bad lots, and undertakes the training of boys whom their parents cannot manage, but "in every case so far, the ephemeral charm of youth had overlaid a solid bottom of vulgarity, stupidity and boorishness. In Jean de Mirbel the Abbé Calou had found for the first time what he had always hoped that God might some day send him. At last a child had come his way who had a soul. . . . But that soul was hard to reach." The search is made easier by Jean's mother, whom the curé files under "false women." She comes to visit her son, in order to spend the night at the local pub with her playwright lover. M. Mauriac has seldom been more gruesome than when describing their middle-aged transports as overheard by the shivering Jean, who innocently had pursued his mother on his bicycle. The curé finds Jean next day, delirious with pleurisy, and with most of the stuffing taken out of him: he tenderly nurses the boy back to health. Meanwhile, Jean has fallen in love with the fifteen-year-old Michèle. Louis, madly jealous of his adored sister, and of his friend whom she had stolen from him, tells Brigitte Pian, who proceeds to martyrize Michèle, and to spatter her with unmentionable filth, while also denouncing the curé to the archbishop. When M. Pian rouses himself to defend his daughter, he too is woefully handled by his wife, who also drives one of Louis's tutors and his saintly wife, who had been Madame Pian's secretary, the one to atheism, the other to death. Yet there is an ironic, technically happy, ending: Jean and Michèle are married, Madame Pian repents, the curé is restored to archiepiscopal favor before dying in Madame Pian's arms of angina; only Louis is left lonely. M. Mauriac has rarely written more savagely: of Madame Pian and her doctor lover: "one does not attempt to visualize the squalid little efforts and contortions of those two bodies whose powers had not kept pace with the sentiments that stirred them," or of Louis, apprised of his own illegitimacy, describing his father as belonging "to that by no means rare species of men who, when desperately in love are afflicted with impotence." M. Mauriac has rarely, also, written more sensitively: here is young Jean, having just been violently sick from drinking too much of the curé's brandy, stolen from the carafe to impress Michèle. The curé asks him to come and pay our Lord a little visit:

> Aha—that was the priest for you. Jean muttered that he didn't believe in all those old wives' tales.
>
> "Really? That's interesting." There was no hint of outrage in M. Calou's tone.
>
> "Does it surprise you?" Jean's tone was smug.
>
> "Why should it?" said the Curé. "The really surprising thing is that a man *should* believe. . . . The really surprising thing is that what we believe should be true. The really surprising thing is that the truth should exist. . . ."

This is so completely adult a novel that the hardest thing for the reader to do is to accept the free full measure of the Great Compassion: if only Brigitte Pian could be made to suffer an agony of remorse, to feel exactly in and for herself all the misery she has caused others! But that is not the way divine justice works: who judges her, who longs for her punishment, descends to her level: M. Mauriac has caught his reader out nicely, and he ends by pointing his moral without rancor: "In the evening of her life, Brigitte Pian had come to the knowledge that it is useless to play the part of the proud servitor eager to impress his master by a show of readiness to repay his debt to the last farthing. It had been revealed to her that our Father does not ask us to give a scrupulous account of what merits we can claim. She understood at last that it is not our deserts that matter but our love."

ANNE FREMANTLE.

*The Miracle of the Bells. Russell Janney. Prentice-Hall.* $3.00.

I UNDERSTAND that Mr. Janney came to novel writing by way of a long and reasonably successful career in the theater world, a place where people are given to elaborate jokes, so there is a slight chance that he meant this 497-page story about life in an eastern Pennsylvania mining town to be an extended parody on a familiar type of sentimental Catholic fiction. If that is what he meant to do, he has carried on the fun for an unbearably long time. It is much more likely, however, that Mr. Janney is not fooling and would like to have his book received as a serious effort, in which case he must expect someone to point out that he has come up with what the hero of his novel, a press agent named William "Whitespats" Dunnigan, would call a turkey.

Mr. Janney is not a Catholic, and unless he is a much more finished dissembler than I think he is, this novel is intended to be, among other things, a friendly gesture toward the Catholic Church, so I would like to say something pleasant about his book, but the only thing I can think of at the moment (and the advertising people have probably said this much better and at greater length already) is that he has written the kind of novel about Catholics and Catholic ways usually described as fit reading for the entire family. No one will come down with sin after reading this book, but quite a few people will come down with nausea and spasms of derisive laughter. I am not disappointed in "The Miracle of the Bells" because the author has not included a few passages on, say, the heated side of human love, but I am very sorry indeed that he had added to that hapless pile of uninspired fiction which, in spite of noble intentions, brings annual sorrow and embarrassment to a large section of the Catholic reading public. This may sound quite harsh, but a look at just what Mr. Janney has been up to will show how difficult it would be to say favorable things about his book.

Press agent William "Whitespats" Dunnigan was in very low spirits when he arrived in Coaltown, Pa. To begin with, he came there on gloomy business: to bury an unheralded young actress—a native of Coaltown—who had worked herself to death in order to finish her first

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and only Hollywood production on schedule. The girl had meant a good deal to Dunnigan; together they had experienced something he called "palship," and he was particularly bitter because a Hollywood producer had decided not to release the film she had given her life to finish, a decision which deprived the dead girl of a certain amount of posthumous acclaim, and, at the same time, shattered her dream of bringing a few moments of beauty into the world. Furthermore, this producer had accused Dunnigan of being a jinx in the entertainment business and had fired him from a $200 a week publicity job. Added to these reasons for Dunnigan's feeling of depression was Coaltown itself—a bleak and loveless community whose inhabitants passed their hopeless days laboring in mines owned by some people (Presbyterians) who lived in usorious splendor in far-off Cleveland. Coaltown had treated the dead actress shabbily in her youth; in fact, her early death had been brought on by a lung infection contracted while working on a coal breaker in her childhood, so Dunnigan disliked the place on sight.

One week later, however, when Dunnigan departed from Coaltown, his faith in mankind and his luck as a press agent had returned, and Mr. Janney's readers are expected to be artistically convinced that the following things have happened: there has been what I will hastily call a miracle, an event which, aided by Dunnigan's ingenuity as a press agent, attracted the attention of all accredited wire services, and drew to the funeral of the unknown actress a collection of Hollywood stars, the Governor of the State of Pennsylvania, a United States senator, a bishop and an archbishop, Jack Dempsey, and some five thousand plain people; several persons have had visions, some of them more than once; the miners are marching to Mass in a body every morning singing "Onward Christian Soldiers"; an extremely unpleasant priest has completely changed his ways; the town atheist has come round, aided by a sound thrashing at the hands of press agent Dunnigan; a huge and gloomy coal breaker, for years the symbol of oppression and niggardly living, has been silenced by a bolt of lightning, and the owners of the Coaltown mines have made public declaration of their intention to install modern, labor-saving equipment in their mines; the Hollywood producer has made grand plans to launch the unreleased film and has also rehired Dunnigan, this time at $500 a week; and Dunnigan himself has brought happiness into the lives of two young people who want to open their own quick-lunch by putting up the money for them to do it.

And all of this is bathed in that boozy jingo light made famous by Norman Corwin and Kate Smith, causing Mr. Janney in his final sentence to remark: "For this, thank God, is America." JOHN BRODERICK.

*Handel. Herbert Weinstock. Knopf.* $5.00.

WITH THE DEATH of Henry Purcell in 1695, the great English musical tradition of the Renaissance ended. Britain in the reign of the Tudors had boasted a musical culture second only to Italy's and had produced composers of the first rank: Byrd, Gibbons, Morley, Dowland, Tallis, Weekes. But in the religious and political chaos of the seventeenth century, English musical genius died away, and the great Purcell stood alone. His opera, "Dido and Aeneas," was the delayed apotheosis of the Tudor vocal style and the last great vocal work of the English Renaissance. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, England was ready for a


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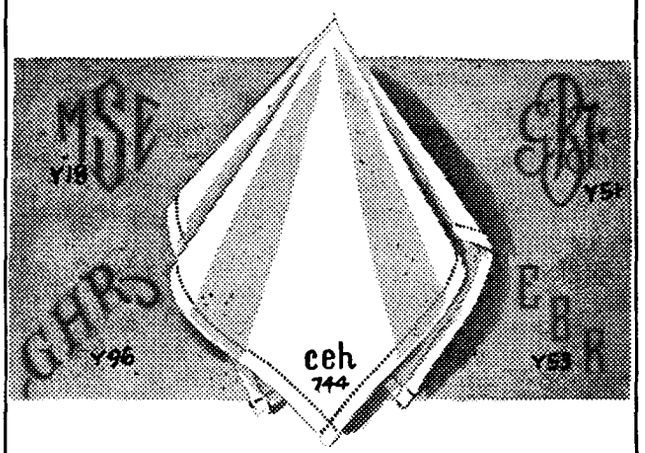


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musical revelation or revolution. Both were effected, not by an Englishman, but by a young German who wrote Italian music, George Frederick Handel.

In 1711 Pope published his "Essay on Criticism." In the same year Handel, who had just arrived in London from Hanover where he was *Kapellmeister* to the Elector, presented his opera "Rinaldo." Thus in the same year in London the Age of Reason and the reign of Italian opera were launched. "Rinaldo" was instantly an enormous success, and for the next twenty years fashionable London required Italian music, Italian libretti, and Italian singers—nothing English was tolerated. Hundreds of operas were performed in these twenty years—Handel himself presented thirty-four, so many of which were successful that he made a considerable fortune. The wits of the town argued constantly on the merits of rival composers, and the annual importation of new singers from Italy kept court and town in controversy about vocal virtuosity.

But Italian opera, though for a time approved and supported by the world of fashion, was essentially contrary to the rational spirit of the time. The first critics of the Age of Reason judged it and found it wanting in Sense and Taste, the two cardinal virtues of eighteenth century England. Dr. Johnson condemned it as "an exotic and irrational entertainment," and Steele asked, "How can chaste Minds delight in the Languishments of wanton Poetry, made yet more languishing by the Graces of Musick? What great or noble is there in the dying Notes of foreign Strumpets and Eunnuchs?" Pope, who admitted that he had no ear for music, described the genius of Italian opera as "A harlot form soft sliding by/With mincing step, small voice, and languid eye."

Thus condemned by men of Sense and Taste and finally abandoned by fashionable London, Italian opera became an increasingly less profitable enterprise. By 1728 it was being satirized and replaced by John Gay's enormously clever "Beggar's Opera." The once acclaimed foreign Strumpets and Eunuchs returned to Italy, but Handel, for twenty years London's most successful composer and producer of Italian operas, stayed on. He had become a British citizen. The failure of his opera company, the New Royal Academy of Music, had cost him his fortune, and he was forced to develop some form of music entertainment better adapted to the tastes of London audiences. Thus financial necessity led him to the creation of his English oratorios, the greatest and most individual of his works. "Esther," the first of them, was introduced in 1732 and was immediately successful; Handel had given to the English a genuinely national substitute for opera. The stageless Handelian oratorio was perfectly adapted to the Protestantism and iconoclasm of British taste which had been so offended by the lush union of music, painting, and drama in Italian opera. And in Handel's tremendous celebrations of the victories of the people of Israel, the English found an allegory of their own great victories.

The seventeen oratorios which followed "Esther" restored Handel's fame and fortune, and when he died at seventy-four he was acclaimed as a national hero and buried with princely ceremony in Westminster Abbey. Handel's worldly success was unequaled by any other musician of his time; he depended so little on the support of aristocratic patrons that he was able to become entrepreneur and impresario of his own operas and oratorios, a remarkable accomplishment in the eighteenth century. Even the waspish Pope admitted Handel's genius and power, and when the composer introduced his first oratorios the poet praised him says, "Strong in new arms, lo! Giant Handel stands,/Like bold Briareus, with a hundred hands;/To stir, to rouse, to shake the soul he comes."

Because Handel was completely and successfully a man of the world, the story of his life is as well the political and social history of eighteenth century England. Therefore the responsibility of his biographer is doubled. Mr. Herbert Weinstock, in his new biography of the composer, has attempted to tell the whole story and has done a first rate job. His method is entirely objective and historical. He constructs a picture of Handel and his times from contemporary documents. How much of this material is of Mr. Weinstock's own discovery and how much he has borrowed from previous biographers of Handel, I do not know, but he has organized it with considerable skill. He avoids the sentimental fictionalizing of which musical biographers are generally so fond—in fact he so far avoids fictionalizing as to expose as unlikely or untrue most of the popular anecdotes of the man and his music. He explodes the legendary Handel and presents instead a credible historical figure.

There are rather few musical judgments in the book. This, however, is rather a virtue than a defect since the judgments of critics and musicologists on the excellence of Handel's music are easily consulted. What we lack is opportunity to hear his music in concert or recorded performance. Handel is a composer of enormous reputation, but his works are seldom performed and then usually in truncated arrangements. Perhaps Mr. Weinstock's useful biography will have salutary effect and lead to more frequent and adequate performances.

JACOB BEAN.

*House above the River. Michael Foster. Little, Brown. $2.75.*

TO RECORD with balance and justice the narrative strain of Michael Foster's first novel in eight years is fairly simple. But to probe and analyze the massive ponderings which encase and intertwine every episode, its causes, progress and results, require a longer process of idea-surgery than is possible here. It is an excessively introspective novel, and is abetted on this course by its first person narration. It ponders interminably upon the chief character's motivations, upon Nature, women, southern aristocracy, family history and all else that comes to view.

John Conway was born and reared in a roomy southern mansion. He came of a distinguished family and all his life he is steeped in reverence for the place and family that gave him birth. But the line is petering out. John's father is the lost black sheep. He is of dubious morality and appears only for a moment in the story, to set out again for distant places. John's mother died while he was yet an infant and is seldom mentioned. But the grandfather, Banastre Conway, who was a Civil War general, sips his juleps and imparts to John the very real wisdom of his years. Mentally and physically he is an energetic old man, and a truly convincing character in these pages. For long a widower, he has met in New York a stately actress named Eugenia Penway and has brought her home as his wife. The true actress, she studies and successfully

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plays the part of the southern matron. Eugenia has a beautiful daughter, Penelope, of whose charm John intimately partakes while in his teens, and again many years later when he is a bachelor historian in New York.

But Penelope, and the motley succession of other females with whom John lives over the years and from coast to coast, are secondary to lovely Regan Berkeley, daughter of the minister who lives near the house above the river. Regan is several years older than John, and in self-defense against the compulsion of his boyish attractiveness, she persists in regarding him as a youngster whom she may not take too much to heart. They have innocent and beautiful trysts in the woodland, sharing the poetry of life and the moonlit river. Nature at last asserts itself, but Regan recoils in worried anguish after her first surrender. Later she marries Paul Driscoll, who is much older than John. He is a small town banker and, to John, a Babbitt without sensitivity or decency. Paul and Regan pack off to his habitat, and there Regan makes the best of a mud-bound house in the cotton fields.

John slowly mends the torn tissues of his inner life, goes through college, becomes an instructor and then a historian, travels the country at will, learns more and more of life from willing women, and after some years settles in New York. He visits Paul and Regan once. He is shaken by the crassness of Paul, who tyrannizes over Regan and is obsessed with a desire to learn of what he is sure had been Regan's scarlet life in pre-marital years. But Regan goes along with Paul, honors her vows in every detail, and has adjusted herself to a marriage far below her true dignity. Several years later she arrives penniless in New York, having escaped Paul's growing brutishness. John arranges for a divorce, frightens the pursuing Paul into craven retreat, and marries Regan. They both are into their forties now, and it takes months for Regan to recover from the cumulative shock of her life with Paul. The crisis that prepares her for the recovery takes form in a horrified reaction towards Paul's past life with uncounted women. At last they settle down in a life of more or less mutual understanding. They have a son, and it is to this son that John Conway addresses his narrative with all its "surprising reticences and appalling candors."

"House above the River" is substantial and weighty reading. It does not suffer from leanness. It does, however, suffer from excessive reflection, which intrudes into every episode. It suffers also from cynicism. At the end John says: "Doubtfully indeed I have spoken of the world. Such faith as I have dissolves as the ink dries, for among all the treacherous miracles of our perceptions I have not fully believed in myself, the only part of the world that I can really know." It is this cynicism, surviving into his marriage, which subtly sours his union with Regan. By the very terms of the novel as the author has conceived it, the marriage should have been the vindication of his life-long love for Regan. With the one woman he really loved, there should be at least a late afternoon happiness. John Conway (or Michael Foster speaking through him) seems to think he has found that happiness, but somehow the reader knows better. The prurience of his life has built a wall between himself and Regan, a wall such as Regan herself has said shall not exist between them. This ending of the novel does not seem to have the candor of the earlier parts. John and Regan know the reasons why there should be a gulf between them, she having been so honorable and he having


*Ready October 20th*

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# *Next Week—*

# Fall Book Number

MOM IN THE KITCHEN, by Anne Fremantle, is a stimulating account of the way such creative artists with words as Gertrude Stein, James Joyce and the rest directly affect our most everyday conversation.

THE POTEEN MAKER, by Michael McLaverty, is a charming story about a hard-pressed Irish schoolmaster. The "purifying" experiment which he performs again and again before his class produces a most remarkable result.

THE AMERICAN SCENE, by Philip Burnham, is an extensive literary article dealing with this vast country of ours, with Henry James's view of it and W. H. Auden's analysis of the two.

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shown little honor excepting in the most worldly terms, but they do not acknowledge that gulf, nor do they seem properly aware of it. In spite of a conclusion that borders closely on a futility not wholly realized by John Conway, and in spite of a wearying addiction to the fleshpots, "House above the River" has many phases of descriptive beauty and sensitivity. The major characters are astonishingly real, and John Conway has memories and present realizations that touch the heart.

T. O'CONOR SLOANE III.

*Thank You, Mr. President. Merriman Smith. Harper.* $2.50.

MR. SMITH has been the White House correspondent for the United Press since just before Pearl Harbor, and retains his post in what may be called this mid-Harrian period. It seems that the senior White House reporter (Mr. Smith) may decide when enough questions have been asked to conclude a Presidential press conference, and signals the finish with the words which entitle this volume and imply the vantage point of the author.

Many of the high moments of recent history are here. No effort is made for serious detailing or evaluating of them. The presentation simply deals with the manner of collecting all this important news, the fun reporters have, and their essential honesty and competence in recording history while it is made. But many a revealing glimpse of the great in their lighter moments may be had. When Churchill visited the White House in December, 1941, a press conference was called:

> Churchill rose as Mr. Roosevelt introduced him to "my wolves—my beloved pack of wolves." He took his familiar stance, one foot just a little ahead of the other, and glared at the reporters.
>
> It was a tense moment. The safety of the British Empire hung by the very thin thread of bulldogged British perseverance. The United States was in mortal danger in the Pacific.
>
> The first question came from a British correspondent.
>
> "Mr. Prime Minister," he said in a high, nasal inquiry, "are you of good cheer?"
>
> The president laughed so hard that he nearly choked on his cigarette holder.

The book, mostly about F.D.R., covers the time through the railroad strike of May, 1946. It is a speedy, entertaining story, dealing with men and events as vital as this generation is likely to see.

JOHN BRUBAKER.

## *CONTRIBUTORS*

*Msgr. Ronald A. KNOX*, author of many books and closely associated with Oxford University, has most recently published "God and the Atom" as well as a new translation of the New Testament and a commentary on the Epistles and Gospels for Sundays and the major feasts.

*Anne FREMANTLE*, at present at work on a novel and a biography, is an English writer resident in New York, N. Y.

*John BRODERICK* is now on the faculty of University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind.

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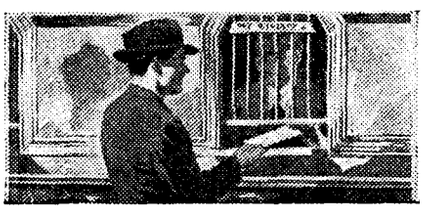

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|---|---|---|
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| 6.25 | 325.00 | 3,607.54 |
| 7.50 | 390.00 | 4,329.02 |
| 9.38 | 487.76 | 5,416.97 |
| 12.50 | 650.00 | 7,217.20 |
| 15.00 | 780.00 | 8,660.42 |
| 18.75 | 975.00 | 10,828.74 |

**Savings chart.** Plan above shows how even modest weekly savings can grow into big figures. Moral: Join your Payroll Savings Plan next payday.

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